

# Nature & You

News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • January/February 2013



## Get your winter hiking boots on

**W**inter hiking is an enjoyable way to experience the outdoors in Missouri. From the subtle sounds of snow falling in the woods to the shapes of trees and hills, nature reveals surprising rewards. Unfortunately many hikers don't think about extending their hiking season into the winter months. Lacing up the hiking boots on a cold, snowy day will allow you to discover the beauty of nature like no other season can.

Join us at the Discovery Center from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 2, to learn more about hiking and camping during winter. We'll provide tips on gear, how to stay comfortable and enjoyable destinations. The event is free and pre-registration is not required.

Until then, here are some starting points for winter hiking. How do you dress for a winter hike? Hiking in the winter is all about dressing in layers. Your base layer should be a good wool or synthetic blend. You want your base layer to fit snugly so sweat is not sitting on your skin causing you to shiver. Insulation is the next layer. This can be a wool sweater or lightweight fleece. The final layer is a shell. This is a waterproof and breathable jacket that will keep you dry while allowing water vapor to escape. The guiding principle to layering is that you are adding and removing layers to keep your body temperature even as you hike. Cotton should never be worn as it takes forever to dry once it is wet.

What types of gear do I need? The answer to this question will vary depending on the length of your hike. Every hiker should own a good pair of waterproof hiking boots and some type of backpack. Trekking poles are optional but do provide some extra help on steep hills. For the hiker who is only doing short hikes a small day pack is ideal. It will allow you to carry some water, snacks and emergency supplies. For those of you that plan to do multi-day hiking you will want a larger backpack. Overnight backpacking requires you to carry



**Scenery changes for hikers during winter in Missouri's woodlands, with terrain and rock formations more visible after leaves fall. Snow provides yet more beauty and another view.**

your own stove, fuel, tent, sleeping bag, water filter and other items to ensure a successful trip. The key to any hike is keeping the weight of your backpack to a minimum. The maximum weight you should carry in a backpack is 25 percent of your body weight.

Where do I go hiking? The Kansas City area offers many short trails that are great for beginners. One option is Burr Oak Woods Nature Center in Blue Springs. Burr Oak Woods sits on 1,071 acres and has various trails ranging from easy to moderate in difficulty. You will enjoy the beauty of the limestone outcroppings, and often you can spot wildlife such as deer and turkeys.

Another great place for a short hike is Maple Woods Natural Area in Gladstone. Total mileage of the interconnected trails is just less than two miles. Overall difficulty is moderate. Fall is a great time to visit this natural area to take in the amazing colors of the old growth maple and oak forest.

If you want a bigger challenge, then you will

want to plan a multi-day backpacking trip in Missouri. Paddy Creek is a 7,000-acre wilderness area located in south central Missouri which gives you the opportunity to hike 17 miles through oak and hickory forest interspersed with shortleaf pine. This wilderness area is also characterized by steep ridges with sandstone and dolomite outcroppings. There is plenty of water access as Little Paddy and Big Paddy creeks flow through the wilderness area.

For additional information on places to hike in Missouri or Kansas City, you can stop by the Discovery Center Nature Shop. Two information books are available for purchase, *Kansas City Wildlands* and *Hiking Missouri*.

When the foliage is gone put on your hiking boots and let the woodlands reveal new sights and sounds. Whether you are new to hiking or not, a trek outdoors on a crisp wintry day is a perfect time to discover nature in Missouri.

— Steve Jacobsen, Education Specialist

# Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center

1401 NW Park Road, Blue Springs, MO 64015 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/280](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/280)



Located in Blue Springs, Missouri, one mile north of I-70 and one mile west of MO 7 on Park Road. Six trails, 1,071 wooded acres, two picnic areas, indoor wildlife viewing area, 3,000 gallon native fish and turtle aquarium, hands-on nature exhibits, gift shop, and sales of fishing and hunting permits.

## **NATURE CENTER HOURS:**

Tuesday–Friday: 7 AM–6 PM

Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM

## **AREA AND TRAILS:**

Daily: 7 AM–6 PM

Daylight Saving Time: 7 AM–8 PM

Closed Thanksgiving Day, day after Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years

## **TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:**

Programs are free. Call 816-228-3766 to sign up for a program requiring registration on or after the first business day of that month.

If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy.

## **Native Flower “Clay Bead” Jewelry**

January 5 • Saturday • 12:30–2:30 PM

*Registration required beginning*

*December 11 (adults)*

Learn about some of our beautiful and essential native plants as you craft jewelry from one of many basic flower shapes...flowering dogwood, sunflower, wild ginger and more. We will create a unique wearable work of art with acrylic “clay” as a set of earrings, a necklace pendant or a brooch.

## **Conservation Kids Club:**

### **Crawling Through Caves**

January 8 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM

*Registration required (ages 7–13)*

Strap on your headlight and discover what it’s like to crawl down inside a cave. Discover how caves form and some of the incredible wildlife that call this dark world home.

## **Snakes Alive**

January 12 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

*No registration required (all ages)*

No one expects to see a snake outside in winter, but at Burr Oak Woods our exhibit snakes stay warm all year. We’ll examine the fascinating life of this unique group of reptiles and maybe even watch one consume its prey!

## **Babes in the Woods:**

### **Wonderful Winter**

January 15 • Tuesday • 10–11 AM

*Registration required*

*(babes under 36 months)*

Just because it is winter doesn’t mean you can’t play outside. Join Naturalist Kathleen for some outdoor exploration. If there is snow, bring your sled! Winter can be a magical time to create special memories with your little one.

## **Little Acorns: Oh Deer!**

January 16 • Wednesday

10–11 AM or 1–2 PM

*Registration required (ages 3–5)*

Most animals are hibernating or taking shelter for the winter, but the deer are out foraging and romping in the snow. Come learn about these large mammals and how they find food and shelter during the cold winter months.

## **Home School:**

### **Walking in Their Footsteps**

January 16 • Wednesday

10–11:30 AM for ages 6–8, 9–11, 12–18

or 1–2:30 PM for ages 6–8

*Registration required*

Who’s been walking through my backyard? The tracks and other signs animals leave behind can tell us many things about them. Join us as we learn how to tell who has been in your neighborhood and where they might be going.

## **Rascally Squirrels**

January 19 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

*No registration required (ages 5+)*

Celebrate Squirrel Appreciation Day! It may be cold but squirrels are still busy outside looking for food in the snow. Whether you think of them as a nuisance or as entertainment, let’s take a closer look at this familiar backyard resident.



## **Rockin’ & Readin’ Nature Tales**

January 26 • Saturday • 11 AM–Noon

*Walk in (ages 2+)*

Join us for story hour as we lead you on fantastic nature adventures! We will meet butterflies, birds, mammals and all sorts of magnificent creatures! We will cross rivers, discover mysteries within the forest and fly across the prairies. Our imaginations are the only limits.

## **Cooking Wild: Small Game**

January 26 • Saturday • 1–2:30 PM

*Registration required (adults)*

This program is geared toward adults. We will be skinning and preparing squirrels and rabbits. Children may attend if they are accompanied by an adult.

## **Missouri’s Most Endangered**

February 2 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

*No registration required (all ages)*

Missouri is home to many beautiful and amazing plants and animals, some of which really need our help to survive. Join us as we explore some of Missouri’s threatened and endangered species. Discover why they are declining, what is being done to help them and some success stories of recovered animals.

## **Conservation Kids Club: Nighttime Stories at Burr Oak Woods**

February 5 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM

*Registration required (ages 7–13)*

We’re going out prowling around Burr Oak Woods to discover the creatures that only come out at night and hear some of their fascinating stories.

## **Naturally From the Heart**

February 9 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

*Registration required (all ages)*

Why buy that special someone a Valentine card when you can make your very own from beautiful materials that nature provides? We provide the natural materials, you provide the creativity. Join us at Burr Oak Woods to create something truly unique and special for your Valentine.

# Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center

1401 NW Park Road, Blue Springs, MO 64015 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/280](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/280)

## Babes Discover Winter Wildlife: Pelts, Puppets and Play

February 12 • Tuesday • 10–11 AM

*Registration required (babes under 36 mos.)*

During the winter we turn our thermostats up and add layers of clothes and blankets for warmth. Join Naturalist Kathleen for some indoor fun as we learn about animals that stay active throughout the long winter chill in this hands-on learning experience.

## Little Acorns: Love Bugs

February 13 • Wednesday

10–11 AM or 1–2 PM

*Registration required (ages 3–5)*

Love is in the air! Have you gone on a hike and been reminded of how much you love Mother Nature? We'll learn about some of the wonderful and magical things many of us love about nature. You'll then create your own Valentine's Day card to give to Mother Nature or someone special at home.

## Home School: Nature Underground

February 13 • Wednesday

10–11:30 AM for ages 6–8, 9–11, 12–18  
or 1–2:30 PM for ages 6–8

*Registration required*

Digging, tunneling, crawling and sliding are all good ways to get around if you live underground. Find out who is living under your feet and how they have uniquely adapted to their fossorial life.

## Owls: Predators of the Night

February 16 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

*Registration required (families)*

February begins the breeding and courtship season of several of our Missouri owl species. Join us as we learn more about these amazing nocturnal predators and find out how to help your neighborhood become good owl habitat.



Savor the wonder of nature by learning how to tap trees, collect sap and make syrup March 2 at Burr Oak Woods.

## Fly Fishing Workshop Part I: Fly Tying

February 16 • Saturday • 10 AM–Noon

*Registration required (ages 10+; children must be accompanied by an adult)*

Join special guest Bill Burkett and discover how to tie that perfect fly that fish cannot resist. Bill is an avid fly fisherman and a member of the Missouri Trout Fisherman's Association.

## Fly Fishing Workshop Part II: It's a Reel Joy!

February 23 • Saturday • 10 AM–Noon

*Registration required (ages 10+; children must be accompanied by an adult)*

Special guest Ryan Wood will spend the morning preparing you to go fly fishing this spring! He will introduce you to the equipment, technique of casting and tying knots. Ryan may even share the location of a few secret honey holes to catch those fish. Then head outdoors and try your hand at catching panfish with your new skills on the education pond.

## Rockin' & Readin' Nature Tales

February 23 • Saturday • 11 AM–Noon

*Walk-in (ages 2+)*

Join us for story hour as we lead you on fantastic nature adventures! We will meet butterflies, birds, mammals and all sorts of magnificent creatures! We will cross rivers, discover mysteries within the forest and fly across the prairies. Our imaginations are the only limits.

## Be a Purple Martin Landlord

February 23 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

*Registration required (adults)*

Have you thought about trying to attract Purple Martins to your property? Join a naturalist to learn the ins and outs of becoming a landlord for these beneficial members of the swallow family. You will leave with the knowledge to prepare for the first scouts of spring.

## Maple Sugaring

March 2 • Saturday • 1–3 PM

*Registration required beginning February 1 (families)*

In our culture with a supermarket in every neighborhood it is truly magical to be able to make something delicious to eat from a liquid flowing out of a tree. Savor this wonder of nature by learning how to tap trees, collect sap and make delicious syrup from native trees.

## The Big Year 2013: A Celebration of Birds at Burr Oak Woods!

Saturday, January 12

7 AM to 2:30 PM

Whether you are brand new to bird watching or already obsessed, 2013 is going to be a great year to enjoy the beauty and mysteries of the avian world! The Burr Oak Woods Big Year events are inspired by the book, *The Big Year* by Mark Obmascik, a true story about three birders who traveled the continent, obsessed to spot the most North American Birds. Come and discover what birding is all about! Join us for a kick-off celebration for the year's events which includes an engaging keynote speaker and videographer from Birdman Productions, Timothy Barksdale, who is the record holder for the Missouri Big Year Competition.

Bird banding demonstrations will let you see songbirds up close and personal. Members of the Burroughs Audubon Society will offer you expertise. Workshops will demonstrate how to attract birds to your yard with feeders and native plants. We will help jump start your Big Year with Birding 101 classes and bird watching hikes throughout the day. The Big Year Celebration includes door prizes and a schedule of birding events and classes for 2013!

### Auditorium Presentations:

10:00 a.m. – Keynote Speaker:

Timothy Barksdale

11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. – Informational session about the Burr Oak Woods Big Year competition rules, opportunities, and prizes!



# Lake City Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

28505 E. Truman Road, Landahl Park, Buckner, MO 64016 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/282](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/282)



Located on 60 acres of forests and fields near Blue Springs, Missouri, six miles north of I-70 on MO 7 and two miles east of MO 7 on Truman Road in Landahl Park. Facilities include an outdoor education center, archery, pistol, rifle and shotgun ranges, including skeet and trap.

## HOURS:

### May 1–September 15

Wednesday–Sunday: Noon–6 PM

### September 16–April 30

Wednesday–Sunday: Noon–4:30 PM

Closed Monday and Tuesday  
and all state holidays.

**FACILITIES AND FEES:** Available for individual or group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.

- Rifle/pistol range: \$3 booth per hour
- Trap/Skeet: \$3 per round per person
- Archery range: \$3 per person per hour

Programs are free. Call 816-249-3194 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy.

## Introduction to Shotgun Reloading

January 11 • Friday • 6–8:30 PM

January 12 • Saturday • 9–10:30 AM

*Registration required (adults)*

Do you enjoy shooting clay targets but decry the rising cost of ammunition? Reduce the cost of shooting trap or skeet by reloading your own shotgun shells. We will show you the basic equipment needed for reloading, what shotgun hulls to use and safety precautions when reloading. On Saturday, you will be able to go to the trap range and try out your reloaded ammunition.

## Introduction to Skeet Shooting

January 19 • Saturday • 9–11 AM

*Registration required*

*(families with children ages 12+)*

Tired of trap shooting and looking for a quicker game? Why not try skeet shooting? Skeet shooting is a great way to improve your basic shotgun skills and improve your hit ratio on winged game. You may even pick up a new sport at the same time.

## Basic Handgun

January 20 • Sunday • 9–11:30 AM

*Registration required (Ages 18+)*

This is a novice class for people who have little or no experience in handling and shooting a handgun. Topics that will be covered will include safety in the home, types of handguns, different parts of the handgun, the variety of calibers, ammunition and marksmanship. Class includes range time.

## Family Trap Shooting

January 27 • Sunday • 9–11:30 AM

*Registration required*

*(families with children ages 12+)*

Trap shooting is a fun shooting sport to experience. This course will cover basic firearm safety, different actions on shotguns, proper shot size, proper firearm fit and shot follow through. Trap is a good way for an upland game hunter to improve their shotgun skills.

## Hunter Education Class

February 5 • Tuesday • 6–10 PM

February 6 • Wednesday • 6–10 PM

February 7 • Thursday • 6–10 PM

*Online registration only at <http://mdc.mo.gov/node/9720> (ages 11+; ages 11–13 must be accompanied by an adult)*

The goal of hunter education classes is to produce safer, more knowledgeable, responsible and involved hunters. Discover the joys of hunting in this three night class designed to meet all requirements for those who wish to hunt using firearms. Registration is required for this three-evening class.

## Beginning Archery

February 11 • Monday • 9–11:30 AM

*Registration required (ages 12–17)*

Archery is becoming very popular with younger people. Many competitions are held between school archery teams. Learn more of the fundamentals of shooting archery such as the proper way to stand, bowstring draw technique, equipment and follow through.

## Visitor usage rises at Lake City Shooting Range

**C**halk up another growth year for the Lake City Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center. Since opening in the summer of 2010, the range has continued to see an increase in the visitor numbers, public shooters and public program attendees. In 2012, Lake City Range served more than 27,000 public shooters alone. Expectations are that the public shooting numbers will continue to increase in 2013.

Shooters from around the world visited Lake City in June for the International Hunter Education Association's annual conference field day. That event also included some extra-fancy shotgun work by Tom Knapp, a renowned exhibition shooter. The range also hosted two NRA Youth Hunter Education Challenges, just to highlight a few events.

In 2012, the range expanded its public programs by including several new NRA courses. A new archery program called Exploring Bow Hunting was introduced. MDC staff also worked with local organizations such as the Missouri Trout Fisherman's Association, whose volunteers helped Missourians discover fly fishing. As popular as these new programs have been, several of our repeat programs such as basic handgun courses, shotgun courses and archery continued to be well attended.

Yes, 2012 was a year of many new and exciting happenings at Lake City Shooting Range. None of this would have been possible if it wasn't for our volunteers and staff that serve Missourians every day. From all the staff, we wish you a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you at the range.

– Steve Elliott, Lake City Supervisor

# Parma Woods Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

15900 NW River Road, PO Box 14024, Parkville, MO 64152 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/283](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/283)

## Predator Calling Seminar and Hunt

January 3 • Thursday • 6–9 PM and  
January 5 • Saturday • 6 AM–Noon  
(Optional Hunt)

*Registration required (ages 11+)*

Predator hunting is one of the fastest growing of all hunting activities today. The reasons are simple. It's challenging, fun and helps to maintain wildlife populations in healthy balance for the ecosystems. If you have ever considered trying your hand at hunting predators, you need to attend this class. We'll start with a classroom seminar to talk about predator biology, hunting and calling equipment, techniques and regulations. Seminar attendees will be invited to the optional hunt to take place on Jan. 5.

## Creating Cartridges: Metallic Reloading Basics

January 24 • Thursday • 6–9 PM

*Registration required (ages 11+)*

Reloading cartridges is a great way to enjoy your firearms even after the season is over. Whether your goals include squeezing out additional accuracy or shooting more for less money, this class will give you the foundation needed to start making safe cartridges right away.

## .22 Rifle Plinking Class

January 26 • Saturday • 9–11 AM

*Registration required (ages 11+)*

The .22 long rifle rimfire cartridge is one of the oldest still in existence today. It probably has at least 100 different uses, but it's also still around because it is so cheap and fun to shoot. Join our staff of certified and trained instructors as we have some good old plinking fun shooting many different types of reactive targets in a safe and controlled environment. Participants in this class should have a solid understanding of firearms safety and be able to apply the basic principles appropriately. Youth must be accompanied by an adult.

## Animal Tracks and Tracking

February 3 • Sunday • 9 AM–Noon

*Registration required (all ages)*

Animals leave tracks everywhere they go. It takes a keen eye to notice them and a little knowledge to know what they are. Visit Parma Woods as we will take a closer look at animal tracks and the animals that leave their footprints in Missouri. We will make some tracks of our own then go find some animal tracks, so dress for the weather.

## Opportunity Calls for Predators

I began to shiver as the icy north wind blew against my face. My eyes began to water, but I remained still because it was that special time of the morning right before the sun comes up. I had a feeling this was all going to work out well. My hunting partner and I had located our quarry just a short time before, and we knew they were still in the area. We quietly accessed our setup downwind of our challenger. I placed a remote caller and decoy a short distance upwind and instructed my partner to sit nearby. I slipped downwind from that a ways, banking that the "would be" predator was going to circle downwind of its prey.

The painful screams from the e-caller beckoned that this rabbit should be put out of its misery. Yet after nearly 20 minutes with no response I was beginning to wonder what I had done wrong. Had I moved at the wrong moment? Had I made too much noise setting up? Had the wind changed directions? It was time to play a different tune.

I reached into my pocket and pulled out a different call. Placing it against my lips, I let out an eerie howl from the device. As if to say "here I am; where are you?" Immediately I got a response from the wooded draw below me. Recognizing my quarry, I yet again switched it up and let out a series of aggressive barks and howls through the call. I sent out a challenge. I let the call dangle from the lanyard around my neck and sat motionless with my eyes strained watching intently for movement. Just a couple minutes later my pulse quickened as the adrenaline shot through my system. There standing on a terrace just 60 yards away was a beautifully furred coyote, the trophy of all trophies. As I expected, this dominant male continued to circle to the downwind side of the calls, placing him just 34 yards



Located in Platte County, Missouri. Go west of downtown Parkville on Route FF to River Road, then west 3 miles to the entrance located just west of I-435. Facilities are available for individual or group use and include a rifle/pistol range, shotgun patterning range, and archery range.

### HOURS:

**May 1–September 30**

Monday and Tuesday: 2 PM–8 PM

Friday–Sunday: 10 AM–4 PM

**October 1–April 30**

Friday–Tuesday: Noon–4:30 PM

Closed Wednesday and Thursday and all state holidays.

### FACILITIES AND FEES:

- Rifle/pistol range: \$3 booth per hour
- Archery range: \$3 per person per hour

### TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 816-891-9941 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

from the muzzle of my shotgun.

The beauty in all this is that this experience could happen to anyone. We were hunting public land close to home. A Missouri Conservation Area, open to all. If you would like to learn more about predator hunting, check out our Predator Calling Seminar 6 to 9 p.m. on Jan. 3 at the Parma Woods classroom. I guarantee a good time.

– Nathan Woodland,  
Parma Woods Range Supervisor

# Anita B. Gorman **Discovery Center**

4750 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64110 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/281](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/281)



Located in Kansas City, Missouri, just east of the Plaza near 47th and Troost. Six hands-on workshops explore Missouri's fish, forest, and wildlife with a Lewis and Clark theme. Discovery Center is a showcase for environmental architecture with four acres of native landscaping. Buy books and hunting/fishing permits at the gift shop.

## **HOURS:**

Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM  
1st and 3rd Tuesdays: 8 AM–9 PM  
1st and 3rd Saturdays: 9 AM–4 PM  
Closed all state holidays

## **TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:**

Programs are free. Call 816-759-7300 to sign up for a program requiring registration.

## **A Single Drop of Rain**

January 5 • Saturday • 10 AM–2:30 PM  
*Walk-in (all ages)*

Floods start with a single drop of rain. An avalanche will start with a single rolling pebble. It is amazing how quickly small things add up in big ways. Join us as we explore the importance of our day-to-day decisions in lessening the impact on our lives, our community and our environment. Create your own town and try to lessen environmental impact through sustainable design. Experiment with watershed models to see how small amounts of pollutants have a wide reach. Learn about “leave-no-trace” and how important it is. It will be a day of fun, exploration and information as we learn the importance of treating our world gently.

## **Nature Nuts Storytime**

January 5 • Saturday • 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM  
January 19 • Saturday • 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM  
*Walk-in (ages 3–7)*

Join volunteer naturalists for a fantastic journey through forests, streams and other magical places as they read select books. Children will participate in a hands-on nature activity.

## **Be Bear Aware**

January 15 • Tuesday • 6:30 PM

Reception; 7 PM Program

*No registration required (adults; ages 14+ are welcome to attend with an adult)*

In the 1950's it was thought the black bear no longer resided in Missouri. However, following reintroduction efforts in Arkansas, black bears have established themselves in southern Missouri and have been sighted in 93 of the 114 counties of Missouri. Because MDC is responsible to ensure bear populations develop and are maintained, we have initiated a research project to learn more about Missouri's bear populations. Join us for the first of three special presentations on large Missouri mammals. A member from the Black Bear Project will be here to talk about the experiences they've had and what they have learned about this elusive animal. A reception with light hors d'oeuvres will start at 6:30 p.m. followed by the presentation at 7:00 p.m.



**A wildlife biologist involved with black bear research holds a cub while doing a den survey in southeast Missouri.**

## **Backyard Brrrrds**

January 19 • Saturday • 10 AM–2:30 PM  
*Walk-in (all ages with adult)*

What do birds need to survive during the winter months? Food is one of the most important parts of a habitat. Join us as we help the local wren, sparrow and finch population by improving their habitats through building a bird feeder. You'll learn about the birds and how to make this a hit with our feathered friends.

## **Wake up for Groundhog Day**

February 2 • Saturday • 10 AM–2:30 PM  
*Walk-in (all ages)*

Awake! Awake! Spring is near or did Punxsutawney Phil, the famous groundhog, see his shadow? Groundhogs, also known as woodchucks, are tidy, furry mammals that hibernate during winter and start to emerge in February. Groundhogs are rodents. Like their relatives, the squirrel and the beaver, they can climb trees and swim. Dig your way to the Discovery Center to learn unique facts about the groundhog's behavior and how they benefit your community. Enjoy the history behind this holiday and our hands-on learning stations.

## **Hunter Education**

February 2 • Saturday • 8 AM–5 PM

February 5 • Tuesday • 6–9 PM

*Online registration only at*

**<http://mdc.mo.gov/node/9720> (ages 11+; 11–13 must be accompanied by an adult)**

Were you born after 1966 and want to hunt in Missouri? If so, then you need to be a part of this hunter education class at the Discovery Center. The course's goals are to develop hunters who demonstrate: safety with firearms, respect people and property, compliance with laws and regulations and awareness of hunting as a management tool. It is mandatory to attend both days. Please plan on bringing your own lunch on Saturday. For assistance with registration call 816-759-7300.

## **Nature Nuts Storytime**

February 2 • Saturday • 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM

February 16 • Saturday • 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM  
*Walk-in (ages 3–7)*

Join volunteer naturalists for a fantastic journey through forests, streams and other magical places as they read select books. Children will participate in a hands-on nature activity.

## **Trees and Tunes**

February 5 • Tuesday • 7–9 PM

*Walk-in (all ages)*

Toe tapping tunes played on fiddle, mandolin and guitar are only possible through wood from trees. Experience the acoustics of Discovery Center's lobby as you hear musicians playing fine instruments made from trees. Learn about the different woods used to make the instruments including trees native to Missouri and more rare woods from around the U.S. and overseas. Many of the world's finest tonewoods are endangered or threatened due to overharvest and development, most used for things besides musical instruments.

## **Scout Program**

February 5 • Tuesday

*By registration (scouts)*

Scout leaders, are you lacking expertise or equipment to complete conservation badges? Bring your troop to Discovery Center. Education Specialist staff will provide a program helping your scouts with rank achievement. All Missouri scout groups of 10–24 participants are welcome to schedule a free program. Please contact Wendy Parrett at 816-759-7305 ext. 1141 or [Wendy.Parrett@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Wendy.Parrett@mdc.mo.gov) to schedule an evening program on the first Tuesday evening of every month.



## From Tap to Table

February 16 • Saturday • 10 AM–2:30 PM

*Walk-in (all ages)*

Missouri has a rich history of using its resources wisely, and making maple syrup is a tasty example of forest conservation. As winter loses its grip on the land, the trees begin to awaken. Sap from deep in the roots begins making its way to the treetops. And February is prime time for tapping maple trees to collect the sweet bounty within. We will be demonstrating the entire process from choosing the right tree, to collecting the raw sap and boiling it down to make maple syrup. Bring your friends and start your own maple sugaring tradition.

## Trout Fishing

February 16 • Saturday • 10 AM–2:30 PM

*Walk-in (all ages)*

Do you enjoy catching rainbow trout from cold and clear waters? Winter brings the opportunity close to home. Join us to learn how, where and when to fish for trout in Kansas City area lakes where they are stocked for a winter-only fishing program. Learn tips to have a great trout fishing experience.

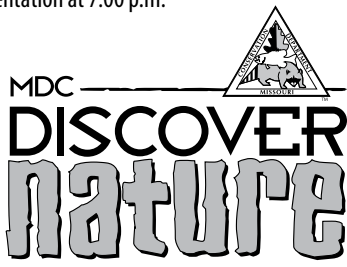
## Mountain Lions in Our Midst

February 19 • Tuesday • 6:30 PM

Reception; 7:00 PM Program

*No registration required (adults; ages 14+ are welcome to attend with an adult participant)*

Panther, catamount, wildcat, cougar and mountain lion – all the same animal. From old hunter's tales and a few well documented kills, we know that this predator clearly existed in our State. But the mountain lion has been considered to be extirpated from Missouri for some time. Now there are more and more confirmed sightings of adult mountain lions in Missouri. Are they moving back as they are pushed out of other States or are they just passing through? Is there a breeding population? Are they something to tell tales about around a campfire late at night? At this presentation, the second in our Discover Missouri Mammals series, Todd Meese, Mountain Lion Response Team Member with MDC will share all there is to know about this seldom seen predator. A reception with light hors d'oeuvres will start at 6:30 p.m. followed by the presentation at 7:00 p.m.



## The big burrowing mammal in your neighborhood

**W**hat is the only holiday we celebrate that is named after an animal? Groundhog Day, of course!

But why the groundhog? Groundhogs, also known as woodchucks or whistle pigs, are the largest members of the squirrel family and common in Missouri.

The groundhog is often the subject of entertainment. Besides being spotted by nature watchers, they show up in jokes, movies and weather forecasts. They're famous for predicting on Feb. 2, Groundhog Day, whether spring will come early or not. That day is the midpoint of winter between the winter solstice in December and the vernal equinox in March. Since the groundhog ends its hibernation as early as the first week of February, the animal was adapted to represent an early peek at spring, or not. But there's more to the famous whistle pig than lore.

Groundhogs are the largest mammal to go into deep torpor hibernation. Most retreat into their burrows after the first frost, usually in October. Hibernation is not just a deep sleep for them. This is when their body temperatures are a few degrees above freezing. Their hearts barely beat, causing blood to scarcely flow in their bodies and their breathing to nearly stop.

By hibernating, the groundhog's body slows down to conserve energy, so they do not have to eat anything during the winter. A biological internal clock controls this furry creature's hormones, and they're also influenced by daily changes in the length of daylight and darkness. This common, but reclusive animal usually emerges out of its burrow around February or early March intent on mating and eating.

Besides feeding on native plants, the groundhog has been known to grab a bite in gardens. The groundhog's diet consists of wild succulent greens, fruits, and vegetables. They occasionally eat insects, wood and bird eggs. Most of

their liquids come from plants and dewy leaves. Due to their binge eating behaviors to reach their maximum mass for hibernation, they can become pests by indulging in nearby gardens.

However, the groundhog occupies an important niche in the wildlife community. On average a groundhog can move 700 pounds of dirt digging one burrow, and they can have four to five tunnels scattered in their territory. As a groundhog digs, they move tremendous amounts of subsoil, helping aeration



and mixing of the soil. This is most beneficial as it influences how many and the kinds of plants that are in their community. Groundhogs are also an abundant and impor-

tant food source for large predators such as bobcats, coyotes and hawks.

Call them homemakers. Groundhogs are mostly solitary animals. But their burrows are often used by other animals such as foxes, raccoons and opossums.

Groundhogs can be numerous in both urban and suburban areas, in part due to the lack of predators in those areas. Occasionally we may see them along fence lines and in meadows as they stand alert, looking for danger. Wherever we may see them, they are fun to watch.

Join us for Groundhog Day on Saturday, Feb. 2, at the Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center for a fun day of learning more about the groundhog!

– Rebecca Rodriguez,  
Natural Resource Assistant

## Burr Oak Woods Photo Contest Open for Entries

Each year visitors to Burr Oak Woods take thousands of wonderful photographs highlighting the beauty and diversity of the area. If you have a photo you'd like to share, now is a great time to do it. Burr Oak Woods is hosting its annual photography competition and would like to include you! Please visit [www.mdc.mo.gov/node/280](http://www.mdc.mo.gov/node/280) or contact Burr Oak Woods for details. Submissions are due by February 28<sup>th</sup>.

## Love of Nature Exhibit

Enjoy the photography of our very own staff and volunteers of Burr Oak Woods as they share their love of nature through the camera lens. Photographs that feature nature in all aspects will be on display throughout February.



### Winter trout time

*Don't forget winter trout fishing. MDC stocks rainbow trout during winter at Chaumiere Lake in Kansas City, North; in Liberty at the Fountain Bluffs Sports Complex, and at four lakes at the James A. Reed Wildlife Area in Lee's Summit. Statewide trout fishing regulations apply and valid fishing permits are needed to keep what you catch. For more information, call 816-622-0900.*

## LIONS, ELK AND BEARS OH MY!

## Discover Missouri Mammals

DISCOVERY CENTER • JANUARY 15, FEBRUARY 19 & MARCH 19

We are lucky to have three large mammals living wild in Missouri: mountain lions, black bears and the recently re-introduced elk. These three large mammals are all native to our State and their presence comes with interesting conservation stories. Join us for a special series of presentations by Missouri Department of Conservation experts. Learn how black bears are being studied and monitored. Hear the exciting story about the collection of elk in Kentucky and their relocation to Missouri. Mountain lions are being seen with increasing frequency but are they really making Missouri their home again? And if they are, is that really something to be concerned about?

These adult programs will be held the third Tuesday in January, February and March at the Discovery Center. Each will have a reception with light



hors d'oeuvres at 6:30 p.m. with the presentation at 7:00 p.m. Here is your chance to meet the people who can help you sort fact from fiction about these amazing creatures as we discover more about Missouri mammals.

## Volunteer Corner

Volunteers are an important asset to the Missouri Department of Conservation and help provide outstanding customer service. We would like to recognize the following volunteers for their unselfish service in 2012:

### BURR OAK WOODS

**100 hours:** Vanessa Eades, Richard Webster

**500 hours:** Lowell Burns

**750 hours:** Dianna Lentz, Deanna Rittel

**1000 hours:** Don Baker

**1250 hours:** Sharon Hutcheson

**1500 hours:** Kathey Torres

**2000 hours:** Ruth Farrand-Cox

### LAKE CITY SHOOTING RANGE

**100 hours:** Adam Bell, Jael Dawson, Lora Winfrey

**200 hours:** Larry Kinder, Richard Galvin

**300 hours:** Bob Fitts

**500 hours:** Tom Van Biber, Richard Dale, William Dobyns

### DISCOVERY CENTER

**200 hours:** Colleen Murbach, Eric Peterson, Bill Taft

**700 hours:** Annette Howk, Jo Roff

**1,000 hours:** Mary Ann Foster

**1750 hours:** Tom Foster, Fran Snow

**2,000 hours:** Dayna McDaniel

### PARMA WOODS SHOOTING RANGE

**100 hours:** Lisa Scibetta, Richard Stanley, Alan Worthy, Kaylynn Howard and Kevin Clossick.

**500 hours:** James Randolph

**1,000 hours:** Josepha Mosley

**1500 hours:** John Hommertzhaim

## Holiday Hours

Parma Woods, Lake City and Discovery Center will be closed for these state holidays:

**January 1, January 21**

**February 12, February 18**